

"LIBERTY AND UNION, NOW AND FOREVER, ONE AND  
INSEPARABLE."

### THE "WAR COMMITTEE'S" REPORT.

In prefacing these extracts we stated that so much of the Report as is already before us would, if inserted at large, fill nearly if not all the four pages of our paper. Three-fourths of it is occupied with the military services of Gen. McClellan, commencing with his appointment as the successor

We suppose it is understood by every intelligent reader, in advance of the perusal of the report, that it is a digest made by the Committee, according to their own views of its bearing, from the large mass of the testimony they have taken in the prosecution of their protracted investigations.

On reading the report compiled by the committee from the great mass of testimony that has naturally accumulated under the examination of "two hundred witnesses, almost entirely men in the military service of the Government, including about one hundred Generals," the first thing that has struck us with surprise is the remarkable fact that among them all, so far as appears from the digest made by the committee, there is nothing that does not bear more or less hardly against Gen. McClellan. It seems to us very extraordinary that two hundred men should be so unanimous in their opinions, if the digest of the committee be, as it should be, an exhaustive reduction of the whole evidence rather than a selection of so much as tends in a single line of direction.

form certain judgments on the military events which form the subject of their review. So greatly have we felt this want, and so numerous are the lacunae which, with the official papers elsewhere attainable by us, we have been able to detect in this exposition, that we prefer to suspend the publication of so much of the Report as relates to the campaign in the Virginia Peninsula until we can have the advantage of comparing the committee's "Report" with the mass of the evidence from which it is reduced, provided we can ascertain that the testimony will soon be placed within our reach. If, however, we find that the testimony is to be long held in reserve, we may feel it necessary to give the verdict of the committee in advance of the publication of the facts on which it purports to be based; for, little as such a course comports with our views of propriety or justice, it may be rendered necessary by the priority which the committee have given to their "verdict" rather than to all the facts of the case.

dent and his Cabinet" should not have been equally eager to derive similar information from others. Any well-informed journalist could have directed their attention to other reports than the paper of Gen. Barnard, from which they report a such length; and, indeed, we could have directed them to still another letter of that officer, from which they might have borrowed some very instructive suggestions. We allude to his letter addressed to Mr. William Henry Harburt, the translator of the monograph of the Prince de Joinville on the Peninsular Campaign, and in which, among other judicious reflections, General Barnard wrote as follows:

"It is probable that armies of such magnitude were never before (in modern times) opposed to each other in a country so wooded and of such impassable roads as that in which has been our theatre of war, and none but those who

It appears that on the 28th of December last an order was issued for the entire command of Gen. Burdette to prepare three days' cooked rations; to have their wagons filled with ten days' small rations, if possible; to have from ten to twelve days' supply of beef cattle with them; to take forage for their teams and their artillery and cavalry horses, and the requisite amount of ammuni-  
— in fact, to be in a condition to move at twelve hours' notice. Shortly after that order was issued Gen. John Newton and Gen. John Cochrane came up to Washington on leave of absence. Previous to obtaining leave of absence from Gen. Franklin, they informed him and Gen. William F. Smith that when they came to Washington they should take the opportunity to represent to some one in authority here the dispirited condition of the army, and the danger there was in attempting any movement against the enemy at that time. Of the particular movement planned by Gen. Burdette they had no knowledge. While in the city they sought and obtained an interview with the President, and the purport and results of that interview are described by the committee as follows:

"The Administration called by the people to the head of the Government, in this the most critical period of the nation's history saw more promptly and fully supported than that of any other Government of which history has preserved any record. The call of the President for more men and money had been more immediately successful; no legislation had been so promptly passed; the Congress and the people had most nobly and generously responded and sustained what their representatives had promised in their name. The same Congress, fresh from their conquests, had again met, and there could be no doubt that the President would have been able to obtain all the money he needs but to refer to the history of the Congress just closed, its prompt and thorough action, I think the Executive will find the fullest power, placing at his disposal all the resources of men and money which this nation possesses to provide what you have just judged to be necessary to the success of the Government and to the maintenance of the Union upon those duties it was to provide the means necessary to put down the rebellion, but upon those whose duty it was to put down the rebellion, those means, and the age is THE EMPLOYER for that purpose, rest the blame, if any, upon the Government and the people, and the Government's expectations have been no less disappointed."

"This report will be read by millions, but if there is only by whom we could hope that it would be read more enthusiastically than any body else it is Abraham Lincoln. For we cannot disguise from ourselves that, although the dead and the fathers of the Army of the Potomac were immediately owing to General McClellan while he held the command, the ultimate responsibility for their rest upon the President. It is no answer to say that, having no military education nor military experience, he could not have expected to know any thing of military matters. He

He expected that the army would be able to fulfill the full measure of the expectation—to know the difference between a good general and an incompetent one. He is expected to know enough of men to select, for the different regiments, through which the powers of Government rest themselves, those who can best serve their country. He is expected to employ the ablest men to lead our armies—the fittest men to command our fleets—the men who have gone most deeply into the science of military campaigning, to command our troops in the most important and difficult situations. His country will claim its strict performance and he is not likely to keep an officer in command a moment after his usefulness has appeared."

Journals not professing any political friendship for the President manifest under this head a tenderness for his reputation, that quite exceeds the "faithful wounds" of his friends, who rejoice in the exposures of this manifesto, some of them presume because they really have not sagacity enough to perceive the recoil of the blows on the head of the President, and some, doubtless, because they hold the President in ill-disguised contempt while professing to be his supporters. Among the journals which concur with the Evening Post in its view of the tendency of these disclosures, two are disposed to speak with kind consideration of the part assigned in them to the President, we mention the Journal of Commerce, a Democratic paper. In its comments on the Committee's Report, as far as that report bears against the President, it

\* What can committee think and say about Gen. McClellan is of little import any, since that is not a matter of degrees of military merits. But the exposure of the general conduct of the war which they did not intend to mend but which is made by their report, has its value. We are impressed with the great art, which shines out in the whole story, that the ratifiers between the President and Gen. McClellan were not at all neutral, but were in the character, and that Mr. Lincoln seems to have been earnestly desirous of supporting McClellan in his military operations, but that the interference of just such men as this committee prevented the honest, earnest desire of the President to be destroyed by the hope of the country to be sustained under McClellan. The President's acceptance of the President (except when his words pass through the hands of other persons) is always visible, and the patriotic and noble utterances of McClellan always respond fully and unambiguously. The political partisans who cannot see the truth of the matter, and who have been the cause of the country. They have ruined a magnificent army and prolonged the war hopelessly."

But there is a part of this report, embraced in the portions already laid before our readers, which is in the nature of a direct accusation against the President, who, in exercising his functions as constitutional Commander-in-Chief, is charged with having frustrated an important movement of the Army of the Potomac while it was under the command of Gen. Burnside, and to have done this at the suggestion of men who, in making their communications to him, though with his approbation, were so much out of the line of their duty that they deserved, in the estimation of Gen. Halleck and Gen. Burnside, to be "at once dismissed the service." And, as if this was not enough, the committee proceed to disclose facts which create a suspicion that either the President, or Gen. Halleck or Mr. Secretary Stanton had allowed "the details" of a meditated expedition, planned by Gen. Burnside, to go forth transcribing that "the

Gen. Burnside, to so far transpire that "they became known to the rebel sympathizers in Washington, thereby rendering that plan impracticable." These are very damaging exposures. The blunt terms in which they are made by the committee and published to the world imply no reservation on their part, either out of personal respect for the President and his two principal military advisers, or out of regard for the official position he fills in the eyes of the people at this crisis, when it is so important that the character of the President should not be lightly esteemed. We shall proceed to quote in this analysis the precise words of the committee, in making their representations against Mr. Lincoln for his conduct in arresting the expedition meditated by Gen. Burnside after the disaster at Fredericksburg.

Gen. Newton opened the subject to the President at 8:45 at the President's, as Gen. Newton expressed it, "very casually," but he said that he had come there for the purpose of informing Gen. Burnside, and suggesting some other persons to fill his place. Gen. Newton states that, when he was asked if he considered the President's action in the condition of the army was the want of confidence in the military capacity of Gen. Burnside, he did not find it improper to say so to the President's right square, and, in fact, he said that he had said so indirectly. When asked if he considered it any more improper to say so to the President's left square, he said that it was a thing indirectly that it was not to do directly, he qualified his previous assertion by saying that his object was to in- duce the President to consider the condition of the army in the condition of the army, in the hope that he would be able to inquire and learn the true cause for himself. Upon receiving this impression upon the mind of the President, Gen. Newton and Cochrane state that they hastened to assure the President that they were not to be understood as having decided that at the close of the interview the President said to them he was glad they had called upon him, and that he hoped that good would result from the interview. Gen. Newton states that he had been told that the President had started; the brigade of infantry decided to accompany it had crossed the Rappahannock at Richard's Ford, and returned by way of Ellis's Ford, leaving the way clear for the cavalry to cross at Kelly's Ford. The day they had arranged to start was the 22d of December, 1862, and from the President the following is learned: "I have good reason for saying that you must make a general move-

"Gen. Burdette said that he could not imagine, at the time, what reason the President would have for sending him to the front. He was a sufficient officer to command, except one or two of his staff who had remained in the rear. He had been told any thing of his plan being the simple fact that a moon tent was to be made. He could only suppose that the despatch related in some way to important military movements in other parts of the country, in which it was necessary to have co-operation."

"Gen. Burnside came to Washington to ascertain from the President the true state of the case. He was informed by the President that some General officers in the army were endeavoring to stir up a movement against the President upon him and represented that Gen. Burnside contemplated some unwise movement, and that the army was dispirited and demoralized that any attempt to make a movement at that time must result in disaster; that no one was to be trusted, and that the Potomac was in favor of any movement at that time.

"Gen. Burnside informed the President that none of his officers had been informed what his plan was, and then proceeded to explain it in detail to the President. He carried out the plan, and the President was very much surprised, and, but the President declined to do it at that time. The Hall and Secretary Seward were sent for, and then learned, for the first time, of the President's action in stopping the movement; although Gen. Halle was previously informed of the President's action by Gen. Burnside. Gen. Halle, with Gen. Burnside, called on the President, and the officers who had made those representations to the President should be at once dismissed from the service.

"Gen. Burnside remained here at that time for two days, and then he accompanied the President to the subject. When he returned to his camp he learned that the President was of the general nature known to the details of the cavalry expedition had become known to the rebel sympathizers in Washington, thereby rendering that plan impracticable and the President was informed of the same. Gen. Burnside stated that he had been summoned to his camp by the President, Secretary Stanton, and Gen. Halle; and in his camp none knew of it except one or two of his staff officers, who had remained in camp all the time. He proposed to the President to tell how his plans had become known to the enemy."

Let us recapitulate the facts set forth in this narrative: Two officers, in performing a service for which they deserved, in the judgment of Gen. Burnside and Gen. Halleck, to be at once dismissed from the army, succeed in so far winning the ear of the President that "he said to them he was glad they had called upon him, and that he hoped good would result from the interview." The actual result of the interview was an order of the President suspending the operations of Gen. Burnside, because, as he said, "he had good reason" for demanding such a suspension, alluding to the representations confidentially made by Gens. C. C. Chase and Newcom, and which, whatever may have been the informality of their communication, were accepted by the President as furnishing "good reasons" for holding Gen. Burnside in check. That is, the President adopted their reasons as his own, and thus threw over the heads of the officers making these statements the protecting shield of the Commander-in-Chief. To have afterwards punished them for making communications on which he had acted would have been, of course, to stultify himself and wrong the officers with whom he had made himself *particeps criminis* if any crime had been committed.

But the matter did not end here. The committee report that Gen. Burnside repaired to Washington and proceeded to explain to the President the details of the plan. The President, still under the influences of the representations confidentially made by the officers whose names he declined to give, refused his assent to Gen. Burnside's project. And it is while matters are at this stage that Gen. Halleck (who nominally holds the office of General-in-Chief while the President is found to perform its duties in nearly every critical juncture that is brought to light) learns for the first time of the President's action in stopping the movement. Gen. Burnside remains in Washington two days, considers the details of his plans to nobody in *Washington* except the President, Secretary Stanton, and Gen. Halleck, and then returns to his army, only to find that these details had "become known to rebel sympathizers" in this city, and that thereby his plan was rendered impracticable. It is not directly charged that the President, Gen. Halleck, or Mr. Stanton had exposed these military secrets, but as it is stated that nobody in Gen. Burnside's army knew what they were except one or two staff officers "who had remained in camp all the time," the committee leave the necessary inferences to be drawn that the "rebel sympathizers" in this city had obtained their news directly or indirectly through one or other or all of the high functionaries above associated.

We could have wished that these sorrowful innuendoes might have been avoided, and that the facts on which they are based might have been suppressed, especially when they are capable of a con-

struction tolerable to the good intentions of all the party concerned. For what good can come from such exposures leading to imputations on presumptive grounds, the prudence of one or another of the high personages charged more or less with the conduct of the war? What is said to damage Gen. McClellan, whether it is just or not, can reflect only on him or on those who seek his degradation. He is in retirement, and will not perhaps be called to do service again under this Administration. But the President, the General-in-Chief, and the Secretary of War should not be heedlessly coupled with associations that tend, so far as they have any tendency at all, to draw their character for capacity or prudence into popular suspicion and disrepute. We are sure that all fair minds will concur with the New York Journal of Commerce in the following reflections on this unfortunate exhibition :

"What shall be said of the bold intimation by this committee against the President, Secretary of War and General Halleck, that the President had betrayed the Government's secrets to the enemy? It is the most gross attack ever made by a committee of Congress on Cabinet or President. Doubtless it was intended to be directed specially at the Secretary of War and Gen. Halleck, but this committee does not hesitate to publish the President's name as one of the traitors. It is a gross insult to the President, and they suspect the responsibility of their betrayal rats. It is unnecessary to say that so gross a charge, unsupported by a proof, when there must have been scores of methods in which the secret might have leaked out, is disgraceful to the character of the committee and subverts the cause to which they profess to be devoted. It is an attempt to make the President and his officers responsible for the lives of his men. But in dealing with the higher authorities at Washington they make a more serious charge, and they will be held to strict account hereafter for it. The whole story about Gen. John Cochrane and the Freelanders, which is a gross insult to the President, and if published, should have been accompanied with fuller statements than these insinuations of the committee."

If we could wish that the President might have been spared the humiliations of this exposure, and that the insinuation of having divulged important military secrets might not have been cast either upon him or his two distinguished subordinates, it is none the less proper, now that the *escandale* has occurred, that the moral which it teaches should be distinctly drawn.

Accordingly, we think it will be admitted by all that the President should not appoint any General to the command of an army, or retain any General in such command, who has so forfeited the confidence of his Government that his movements can be arrested at the unofficial and clandestine suggestion of two of his subordinate officers. This is not only a matter of decorum but a plain and elementary principle of military administration.

In the second place, this disclosure serves to set more in a clear light the undified nature of the position held by General Halleck under the existing military system of the Administration, if that can be called a system where system there would seem to be none. For as before we have had the spectacle of a General-in-Chief left by the President in total ignorance as to the plans of Gen. McClellan, so now we have the spectacle of a General-in-Chief who, though apprized that Gen. Burnside mediated a movement, was not apprized by the President that the movement had been suspended at his own instance. And so little were Gen. Halleck and the Secretary of War enlightened as to the true state of the facts that they urged the President to dismiss the two officers on whose information he had acted, as though the President, after he had made their opinions his own, could have honorably punished them for giving him counsel which he had judged to be more reliable than that of all his other advisers put together. For he acted on the advice of Generals Cochrane and Newton, without thinking it necessary to take either Gen. Burnside or Gen. Halleck or the Secretary of War into his confidence. The President doubtless knows better than we do how much the opinions of Gen. Halleck are worth in deciding a military question, but it seems to us that while the latter holds the post of General-in-Chief he should at least be treated with the respect due to his office. If thus far he has failed to fulfil the expectations of either the President or the country, may it not be because of the very limited field within which he is permitted to display his abilities?

We have the pleasure to give to our readers below a letter written by the late venerable Judge PETIGRU, of Charleston, a man who dared to be true under the most trying circumstances in the worst of times. The letter was addressed to the Hon. REVERDY JOHNSON, of Maryland, who had sent to the Judge a copy of the proceedings of a great Union meeting which had just been held in Baltimore, and embracing the eloquent and patriotic speech made by Mr. Johnson on the occasion. The recent publication in our paper of the letter of a kindred spirit, the late distinguished William C. Preston, of South Carolina, reminded a friend of the letter of Mr. P., which he had seen in Mr. Johnson's possession, and at his request a copy was yielded for publication. It is embodied:—

CHARLESTON, APRIL 16, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR : I came in with the Constitution which went into operation only a few weeks before I saw the light; and I have ever devoutly believed that Union is our greatest interest. Uprootlessly for me, my countrymen have, in the course of the last fifty years, taken up the idea that it was a mistake, and that cotton is our greatest interest. The universality of the cotton doctrine, by which I am surrounded, had no sort of influence over my way of thinking, and I have the misfortune of witnessing, day by day, manifestations of enthusiasm in which I have not the slightest participation. You may be sure, then, of my ready and hearty concurrence in your able and lucid argument against the right of secession; for the Union would be but a precarious possession if it stood upon the mutable ground of the popular opinion of expediency from day to day. In fact, if it has been authoritatively proclaimed at the time of its adoption that it was only binding as long as it received the voluntary admission of the several States, it never would have been adopted at all; for people would have justly said that it was no improvement on the Confederacy. For the Confederacy would have answered all its purposes if it could have been sure of the voluntary adherence of the several States to the duties that were submitted to their free arbitrament.

There is no doubt the men of 1757 did undertake a new thing in attempting to divide the civil power between the Nation and the State, so as to leave each of them sovereign within their several spheres. But our secessionists pretend that they did not mean it. You have shown to demonstration that this pretence of the secessionists is groundless.

I hope there is sufficient good sense in the Maryland people to discern the right and to follow it, and I might well envy you for having such an audience to appeal to.

What is to be the end of all this seems to me inscrutable. But even if the Gulf States and South Carolina do flake off forever, I will never cease to witness with joy whatever increases the prosperity and honor of the United States.

Yours, truly,

J. L. PETTIGRU.

THE HON. RICHARD JOHNSON, Baltimore

The writer of the subjoin letter, being aware that we are not in the habit of noticing anonymous communications, meant doubtless nothing more than to give us a private and friendly hint on a point as to which, from our want of "means or capability of judging," we are, he conceives, in some danger of being led astray. But as his letter, notwithstanding the irregularity under which it reaches us, affords us a good opportunity for saying a few timely words in response to his friendly suggestion, we have determined to give it insertion in our columns. Our anonymous correspondent writes as follows:

PHILADELPHIA, APRIL 2, 1863  
 GENTLEMEN: In reading your valuable paper from time to time—to which I regularly subscribe—I notice a constant endeavor on your part to bring one, McCellisto into notice. I am sure that you can find no man any else among the relieved officers of the army, who is more deserving of such publicity, by any reliable facts, good ground for such partiality, it is well. I am acquainted with this gentleman and his family, and therefore know something of the character of the respectable parts of the members of the army, and know also that the General is a very well-to-do man, and knows all the members of the army, and is well-to-do towards them as individuals, that the General is a man much overrated by many people, chiefly by those who have no means or capability of judging, at least of the difference between the genuine and the rascals. I may be added that this has been my own case, as I have known all that he has done, both on and off duty, and in the army under his command; and, I am sure I say, no one having every confidence in the great civil power of the land and its agent, (the Government at Washington) that the General is a kind and good man, and a very good man, and that he has been in the army, under the lead of McCellisto, has resulted in much more than the loss of his life, and therefore much more than the just cause of the country. In conclusion, permit me to add that those designs and insidious men who are now plotting to introduce the name of McCellisto to the public as a martyr to the cause of the South, and to the cause of the South, will find themselves anticipated. Yours, respectfully,  
 J. M. SPENCER

With the members of Gen. McClellan's family we do not conceive that we have any thing to do. The advantage possessed by our anonymous correspondent in knowing something of "the capable and incapable parts of the members of this family" may be such as to justify him in the conviction that the General is "now much overrated by many people." Under this head we have nothing to say, for we have never seen any members of Gen. McClellan's family, as indeed we have never seen the General himself, or had any correspondence with him, direct or indirect. It has been our disadvantage (or our advantage) to know him simply by his public words and acts. Having no personal prejudices against him and no prepossessions in his favor, we have supposed ourselves "capable" of "judging" him and his public conduct without any danger of being plighted, like some, to find him always and infallibly right, or, like others, always and inevitably wrong. While he was honored with the confidence of the Administration and retained by the President in high military command we gave him the support to which we believed him entitled as a faithful and skilful soldier of the Republic, who, if he did not deserve all that was claimed for him by some of his admirers, had at least not deserved the systematic detraction with which he was pursued by a class of politicians always more conspicuous for their zeal than their discretion. We supposed, doubtless in our ignorance, that the confidence and affection won by Gen. McClellan from the great majority of his companions in arms, who knew him in the camp and on the field of battle, were as likely to be good evidence of his military capacity as could be obtained in any other way by human testimony.

After he had been relieved from military command we had hoped that his detractors would at least give some respite to their assaults. Powerless to weaken the confidence of either the army or the great mass of the people in both the patriotism and the capability of the dismissed officer, those assaults were henceforth purely gratuitous, for we suppose they were not needed, however much so intended, to prevent the Administration from restoring Gen. McClellan to active service. They served only to keep alive that irritation and debate which, after his removal, should have been rather appeased than exacerbated by his enemies, if they had been as discreet as they are embittered. All attacks made upon him under such circumstances can only enure to the advantage of his personal popularity, unless the grounds of that popularity can be undermined more effectually than was ever done by vilipendation or by *ex parte* allegations, under whatever color they may be concocted and circulated.

We shall cease to make Gen. McClellan a theme for remark just so soon as his enemies are willing to leave him undisturbed in the retirement to which he has been remitted by the President. But if he is perpetually assailed, and if, at this stage of his military career, we are called to publish long and elaborate documents in review of his military operations, we shall necessarily continue to treat him as a "current topic." Our correspondent, in supposing himself to perceive a "constant end-on-end" on our part to bring Gen. McClellan into favorable remembrance—made much more so than any one else among the relieved officers"—must be a recluse who reads only the pages of the National Intelligencer. If others were content to leave General McClellan in the seclusion he adorns by his silence, we should have little occasion to make "remembrance" of him; and if he were never assailed by partisan rancor, we should have no reason for essaying the "favorable" mention which our sense of justice sometimes imposes on us as a duty.

And we would suggest that there is still another way in which the "favorable remembrance" of Gen. McClellan may be for a time postponed, if not permanently overlaid in the popular mind. It is in pre-occupying the popular mind with brilliant victories won by Gen. Hooker on the banks of the Rappahannock, and by Gen. Grant in the trenches before Vicksburg. These achievements, if we were to judge from the impatience that attended the movements of Gen. McClellan, have been already sufficiently long delayed, especially when we consider that the first named officer, on assuming to the command of the Army of the Potomac, proposed that his troops should "give battle to the enemy wherever they could find him," and when the latter received the applause of the Secretary of War for knowing no other strategy than that summed up in the comprehensive phrase, "I propose to move immediately on your works." When Vicksburg falls and Richmond is captured (with the destruction of the insurgent armies) the friends of Gen. McClellan, provided they are as patriotic as we take them to be, if they are worthy of him, will have their mouths too full of exultations and their hearts too full of gratitude to disturb the most bitter and unrelenting of his opponents by making untimely "remembrance" either of his successes or of his misfortunes.